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Revolution is the solution for those oppressed. Anarchism is the way forward to Social Revolution.

Woodcut of George Jackson Antonio Frasconi

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Editorial:

Anarchism and Racism

This is the first issue of the ***Journal of Anarchy and the Black Revolution,*** and although I do not think it will be the last, I do not know what form and shape it will take from here on out. This is very much dependent on the nature of the anti-authoritarian Black struggle which is developing and fermenting in our communities. We do not know precisely what our relationship with the North American Anarchist movement will be. One of fraternal relations, hostility, or wary support.

Clearly, a movement which is all White, middle-class, self-absorbed, and naive about our struggle is not one we can unite with. In addition, it is a movement which can do very little for itself, let alone for our struggle. So it is time for some frank talk with Anarchists if we are to move forward from here toward the realistic possibility of a social revolution.

For over 15 years, since I have been in the so-called North American Anarchist movement, I have been at war with it. I have continually pointed out in my letters, articles in Anarchist publications, speeches, and personal conversations that the North American Anarchist scene is not what it must be if it is to be taken seriously. I even doubt that it is a social movement at all, but rather a White youth counter-cultural scene. I am not the first one to have recognized this. Many other Black and non-white Anarchists I have spoken to like Juliana in Minneapolis, Greg in Seattle, Barbara in New York, Ojore in New Jersey, Shawn in Massachusetts, and others have recognized this. Also many Black radical and community activists who might be interested in Anarchism are turned off by an all- White middle class scene. Who can blame them? The Anarchist movement has some of the worst politics on the question of class and race in this society, and do not even ***pretend*** to be concerned with the plight of the super-oppressed Black masses. Whenever I have attempted to call for reforms within the Anarchist movement itself, such as racial and cultural diversity, recruiting more Blacks and 3rd world peoples into the movement, building an anti-racist movement of a new type to challenge the white identity as well as the oppression of non-White peoples, I have been resisted at every turn by "Anarchist purists" and White radicals within the scene. I fought with the IWW, Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation and other United States Anarchist groups in the 1970's, when I first came into the Anarchist scene. I most recently went through such a struggle with a group called Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation, which has its headquarters in New York. (see the article in this issue for clarification). So it is not just a matter of this being a new issue, this has gone on for years!

Anarchist Purism and White Supremacy

The question then arises: are the Anarchists consciously building a white movement, for what I call "white rights" issues that only the radical chic middle class are interested in? This is the case even when many of them live in cities which are majority-Black population centers, such as Detroit, Oakland, Atlanta, Philadelphia and others. They live in the Anarchist ghetto and look at the Black community which surrounds them with suspicion and muted hostility. Can this type of movement work toward a social revolution when by the end of the decade it is predicted that half of this nation will be non-white peoples? I don't think so!

Even the Republican party recognizes that it cannot raise any hell or hope to build a capitalist governing coalition without the participation of non-white people, so what the hell is wrong these Anarchists?

Anarchist purism is a form of ideological conformity, a method of keeping Anarchist ideals "pure" and to prevent any new movements from arising which violate cardinal principles of traditional European Anarchist thought and practice. This also works to ensure that only white people will define, and will continue to dominate Anarchist theory, and that only white people will make up the ranks of the movement in the main. Movements which arise in the Black or Hispanic communities, which are influenced by revolutionary nationalism and the anti-authoritarian core of

Anarchism would be denounced as *"not being truly Anarchist"*, and thus denied support. I have seen this done historically to the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee in the 1960's, Martin Sostre (and myself) in the 1970's , MOVE in the 1980's, and to this very day. Without fail, this is a way of keeping the movement "right" [*and white*]. But it also keeps it in an ideological straitjacket which separates it from the social events outside the white radical community, which is where the real world is; so it helps of marginalize Anarchist when one demands conformity to the catechism that Bakunin or Kropotkin wrote over 100 years ago. How is this any different from the Marxists?

There is also the question of elitism and racism from those Anarchists like the Love and Rage group who feel that they can think and speak for Black revolutionaries and the communities they are from. These people are from privileged households, have left home to *play the big bad revolutionary* and fake being poor. The truth is a pair of combat boots, rip jeans, and a dirty t-shirt does not make one a poor person or an expert on American racial politics. This is nothing but missionary work to these people. They may have changed clothes, but they cannot change attitudes; they are arrogant , doctrinaire, and condescending to the max. They feel that they have ***the answer***, and that everyone, especially Blacks, should follow them to the promised land. Only they are qualified to speak on questions of race and class. They know everything!

White radicals like this really irk me. This is why only an arrogant, self-centered movement will surface with this kind of prevailing social ethic at the core of the group.

But there is another kind of white radical within the Anarchist movement which needs to be taken to task and this is the type that claims not to know any difference between the condition of Black and White workers, and argues that we "are all in the same boat". This type pretends not to see any racial oppression in U.S. society hardly at all, and that Blacks and other non-whites do not deserve any "special treatment". This type of person is usually to be found in the Anarcho-Syndicalist movement in the United States. This is in fact an old line, an economist position, which sacrifices the struggle against racism to that of class peace among the Black and white workers. We are to unite around economic issues, and avoid "contentious" and "divisive" issues of race. But as I will expose, this is in itself really a racist and escapist position, and shows one to have no moral backbone at all.

It is really a cop-out to try to claim that the "working class" is being oppressed without pointing that that there is no monolithic working class in America, and never has been. There has always been a brutalized and exploited African-American working class, beginning with slavery, through both agrarian and industrial periods of the economy, down to the so-called information age. Black labor has always been subjected to racial oppression in addition to that of the struggle as workers fighting the rule of capital. It is ***reductionism*** of the worst sort to claim there are no differences in the social position of the Black working class, no special oppression, as a group like Workers Solidarity Alliance does. In an article published in **Ideas and Action** , the WSA political journal, one writer stated that he saw no difference or "nothing special" as he put it between left-handed persons and the plight of African-Americans. But the most infamous issue of the publication was in a full-page article in issue # 13, printed in 1990, called *"White Workers and Racism"* in response to the racist murder of Yusuf Hawkins in New York.

In the most sickening fashion possible, the article tries to equate "attacks against innocent whites by minority youth".....with Hawkins' racist murder. Neil Farber (a pseudonym for an unidentified member of WSA) talks about "racists and demagogues on both sides", a classic white middle class cop-out. He denied that there is such a thing as *white skin privilege , saying that it was just the creation of a number of Left-wing sects in the 1960's.* We must assume that he was talking about the Black Panther Party or the revolutionary syndicalist League of Revolutionary Black Workers, although he tries to say he is talking about white radicals.

He says that the relatively higher standard of living is due to "workers struggles", as if the white workers had "earned" their booty by fighting the boss. Not true, the white middle class standard of living is only possible because of the super-exploitation of colonial countries and the enslavement, and continued super-exploitation of African-American and

other non-white workers.

This nonsense by Farber is crowned by a statement that the Anarcho-Syndicalist movement has "always" supported the struggles of oppressed workers. This is a lie, the Anarchist movement generally has never supported the Black struggle or engaged in anti-racist movements. The WSA is no exception. They are just now doing it.

The denial of white skin privilege is a type of ***"obscurantism"*** that the white Left in general, and the Anarchists, in particular, are guilty of. This obscurantism or obscuring of the truth of Black oppression has also been called the "white blind spot" by radicals like Noel Ignatiev, the longtime radical organizer and theorist on race and class issues.

But in addition to hiding behind economist issues, there is the kind of ***eclectic escapism*** within North American Anarchism which pretends that gender oppression, gay sexual oppression, class exploitation or other oppression, or some other contradiction among the white nationality is on a par with or even more important than white supremacy.

These are usually people who also subscribe to ***compartmentalization,*** or attempts to neatly confine the dynamics of racism to a side issue or single issue politics, as just another 'ism". This is reflected in their movements almost all-white movements against "fascism" or what they call racism, usually crude KKK/Nazi organizing. (see my article on vanguardism versus vanguardism). They never deal with institutional racism or the white supremacy differential in the quality of life in this country. Its' all sophomoric, idealist, and emotional, and it certainly doesn't do Blacks and other non-whites any real good. We are no safer from fascism because of these white radical do-gooders. They are part of the problem, not part of the solution.

Who knows if it will be possible for the U.S. anarchist scene to coexist with, let alone work with a newly emerging Black anti-authoritarian movement? One thing that White Anarchists must understand it that this is not merely a question of getting Blacks and other non-whites to join Anararchist associations, just to say they have a Black face; we must work to build a non-racist society and we must have ***principled unity.***

Well, I have raged long enough, now to get to this premiere issue. I hope you will enjoy it.

BLACK ANARCHISTS IN HISTORY

SOSTRE

Martin Sostre, a Black Puerto Rican, was framed up in Rochester, New York in 1964 on drug charges by cops who wanted to close his radical bookstore, where Black youth hung out during the 1964 revolt against racism and police brutality. The cops and racist politicians were afraid of Sostre and the black community organization he had built in that city even before the revolt , so they setout to harasss the group and finally to frame him on drug charges. The charges of his being a drug dealer was also used to try to discredit him to the community, the youth especially. But although he was railroaded to prison with a 41-year sentence, and the cops broke up the youth rebellion with naked police repression, he continued to fight on even behind prison bars; in fact he became the foremost political prisoner in the world during the late 1960's and early 1970's, preceding the coming of George Jackson and the Attica Prison revolt in 1971 at that state penitentiary in New York state.

The battle over Sostre's freedom laid the groundwork for today's political prisoner defense work. Sostre himself was an extremely important figure, a so-called "jailhouse lawyer",whose lawsuits won democratic rights for prisoners all over the country, such as the right to read revolutionary literature, against the solitary confinement units; freedom of

religious worship for unorthodox or radical religions like the Nation of Islam, Church of the New Song and other groups, and many other issues which affected the lives of hundreds of thousands of prisoners, and which directly led to the Prisoners Rights movment of the early 1970's. He was greatly respected by prisoners and revolutionaries all over the world. He was truly an historic figure.

He explained his opposition to the prisonerats this way in a letter to supporters:

" I cannot submit to injustices,even minor ones. Once one starts submitting to minor injustices and rationalizes them away, their accumulation creates a major oppression. That is how entire peoples fell into slavery."

Sostre was a social revolutionary Anarchist, although generally the North American anarchists refused to accept him as such, unofficially because of his race while claiming that "officially" he was not an anarchist because of the fact that he included Leftists in the coalition demanding his freeedom. These white anarchists, identified with the Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation, a national group of *armchair anarchists* who condemned him in the harshest language. One person even wrote a letter to the Canadian Anarchist newspaper ***Open Road*** saying that he did not even look like an anarchist, a clear reference to the fact that he was Black. (The racism within the anarchist movement was worse then than it is now, but it will always be there until it is combatted).

Sostre and other imprisoned revolutionaries who have looked at the situation referred to people outside as living in "minimum security", while they were in maximum security, meaning that our communities subjected to racism, police bruality, poverty, and other social ills were "captives of the system".

We must honor Martin Sostre in the best way possible, and that is follow his example of lifelong struggle. No, he isn't dead, but it is up to a new generation of organizers to carry out the work he started. We must build a Black Anarchist movement which can start to deal wtih the deep-seated problems in our communities and can challenge the power of the enemy to station his troops there and have any political jurisdction there. We need both Anarchism and the Black Revolution if we are to succeed.

SOSTRE

We are all political prisoners regardless of the crimes invoked by white racist oppressors to legitimize their kidnapping us from the ghettos and torturing us in their cages. You don't believe it? Well, what crimes did our forebears commit when they were kidnapped from Africa, imprisoned aboard slave ships and brought to America where their labor was exploited for 350 years? Didn't you legalize these crimes against black people and codify them in your slave codes? Didn't you legitimize your genocidal slaughter of the American Indians and theft of their land by legislating Indian laws and the Homestead Act? Were not these crimes politically motivated and formed the very foundation of United States capitalism? And are you not now the benefactor of this loot and enjoying a standard of living many times higher than your kin in Europe, South Africa and Australia?

Yet, after our forebears were forced to build for you the richest country in the world with their blood and slave labor, the descendents of the white racist kidnappers, murderers and robbers who inherited the blood-stained loot have deluded themselves in the belief that they are the guardians of "law and order," that their victims must recognize them as such, acquiesce in their oppression, and relinquish all claims to their stolen heritage!

...No prisoner in the history of New York State--possibly of the United States--has ever borne the stigma of being the mass-murderer of 43 persons [killed by New York State at Attica]. Yet the mass-murderers of 43 persons will not be indicted. They continue in office enjoying political largess and passing themselves off as upholders of law and order.

The reality is that we politically aware prisoners, whom you cannot deceive in believing the lie that your murderous outlaws are the guardians and dispensers of law and justice, shall continue to employ all means necessary to free ourselves from your genocidal white racist oppression. Hostage-taking is to us as legitimate a means of struggle as was your seizure of agents of the Crown during the American Revoultionary war, and the seizure of British tea during the Boston Tea Party. We, and not our oppressors, are the sole deciders of what means to employ in our liberation struggle.

THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE AND THE 1960'S BLACK REVOLT.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was an example of the spontaneous social movement preceding the founding of a formal organization. It was the year 1960, and all over the racially segregated South, spontaneous "sit-in" demonstrations, where Blacks would go to department store lunch counters, restaurants, and other all-white eateries, and demand to be served food, were sweeping the South. In Greensboro, North Carolina in February of that year, four Black college students had started it all. Within two weeks of the protests in Greensboro, over 50 other cities experienced sit-ins, from Richmond, Virginia to Chattanooga, Tennessee; from Houston, Texas to Atlanta, Georgia.

The sit-ins were a form of youth protest, and a counterpoint to the adult wing of the movement which had led the famous bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama in 1956 , and brought Dr. Martin Luther King to national prominence.

The student and youth movement was almost the very antithesis, tactically, politically and philosophically, of King's adult-led civil rights movement. It placed no emphasis on leaders, and pushed for local autonomous movements, and it was also far more militant, resulting in armed self-defense or street fighting on many occasions, while King and the Black preachers in the Southern Christin Leadership Council counseled "non-violence" in the face of racist attack.

SNCC (grammatically called "snick") was founded at a mass convention arranged by Ella Baker, a legendary movement activist and Dr. Martin Luther King's chief of Staff at Southern Christian Leadership Council headquarters in Atlanta. She not only arranged for the meeting , but she also fought to assure its independence from King and the old adult leadership.

The meeting was held in the Spring of 1960 in Raleigh, North Carolina, and had almost 500 persons in attendance : 300 Black movement activists and 200 white observers. At this meeting a loose federation of organizing groups was agreed on. Advocating a brand of aggressive direct action protest tactics, SNCC quickly became the most militant wing of the entire civil rights movement, and entered the thick of the struggle: they reorganized the Freedom Rides" in 1961 across the South , after another civil rights group, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) gave up when it encountered bus burnings and brutal beatings by Ku Klux Klan hooligans, and ended up being badly beaten themselves and jailed in Mississippi; they registered thousands of Blacks to vote in the face of racist terrorism by the infamous Alabama and Mississippi Klans; they set up "freedom schools" to train local organizers and to serve as a local base of operations. They also served as an alternative to the segregated public schools for Black youth.

SNCC was a democratic organization, and did not depend on leaders, either in its own organization or in the communities that it worked in. It was an organization of organizers, not of leaders.. Throughout all of the years of struggle, SNCC field organizers did not hold themselves out as "the leaders" with "the answers", but rather deferred to the wishes of the local community, and tried to develop indigenous local leadership. This creation of a group of organizers, acting as a catalyst group to create mass movements on the local level was a new phenomenon, and has not been seen since in the Black movement. Because of its loose structure and anti-authoritarian politics, many referred to SNCC as an "anarchist" movement. New Left philosopher, Paul Goodman, and author and ex-SNCC'er, Howard Zinn are just two impressed with the early anti-authoritarian nature of the group.

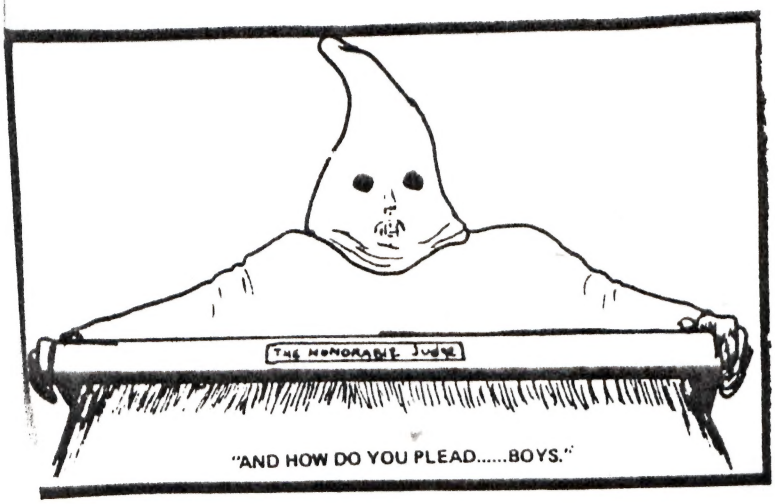
Although originally having illusions about the nature of American capitalism and government reforms, SNCC quickly began to have doubts about the possibility and credibility of the government and the corporate sector, these doubts turned into complete disbelief that this system could provide Africans in this country their full human rights and a realization that this government was part of the problem, not the solution. The SNCC then adopted an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist stand, they opposed the war in Vietnam and sought to redefine the nature of the Black struggle.

After the Southern movement had won the right to vote, the end of legal segregation, a new black consciousness movement arose in 1964-65. Given the name "Black Power", this movement took the position that the Black working class must organize itself, and it rejected its earlier reliance on white activists. Although this was the majority sentiment, many did not want to expel white activists who had loyally fought next to them for many years, and the tension over the issue almost wrenched the organization apart.

More critical than this issue of expelling all whites, SNCC organizers were from the middle class and could not figure out how to give expression and an organizing plan for Black workers and the poor beyond the reformist civil rights stage. Because they failed to come up with a revolutionary program, and the tension over various other ideological questions, the organization began to die.

It tried to save itself by calling for a variety of urban Black insurrections during the latter 1960's and also uniting with the West Coast Black Panther Party, which had just been formed in Oakland, California during the Summer of 1966 by two young firebrands Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale. It merged its membership and leadership into the BPP, but the united front was short-lived, because of suspicion, mistrust, misunderstand, and leadership styles. The FBI also helped in the break-up by spreading rumors, sending false correspondence or "poison pen" letters, and other tactics.

Ultimately SNCC fell into sectarianism, personal enmity, and obscurity, but even though it has vanished from the scene, it provides a model and an example of an anti-authoritarian Black movement in our struggle, where none has existed before or since. In the 1990's we must study SNCC's example, so that we can build a national federation of Black community organizers in this period, which can raise a revolutionary politics of a new type and deal with the many urban problems bedeviling our people at this moment. That is our task.



UPDATE ON CHATTANOOGA 8 CASE

On the evening of February 5, 1993, 8 white cops, 5 from the Hamilton County (TN.) Sheriff's Department and three from Soddy-Daisy (TN), beat and choked Black motorist Larry Powell to death. Powell's car had been stopped by three Sheriff's deputies, purportedly because it was swaying in and out of traffic. The cops claim that after they had given Powell a field sobriety test, and then handcuffed and placed him under arrest, he began to resist. They called in reinforcements, and during the struggle they admit choking the man four times, twice with "v-holds" or arm locks around the throat, and then two other times with a nightstick. It is the nightstick which is believed to have caused his death, breaking the small bones in his neck in the process.

Eyewitnesses to the killing, say Powell was not resisting arrest at all, that both his arms and legs were shackled, and that the cops just beat and killed him for sport. This was clearly a racist killing and abuse of force. But it was the 18th death of a Black man in custody since 1980, and 25th death of a civilian by local police.

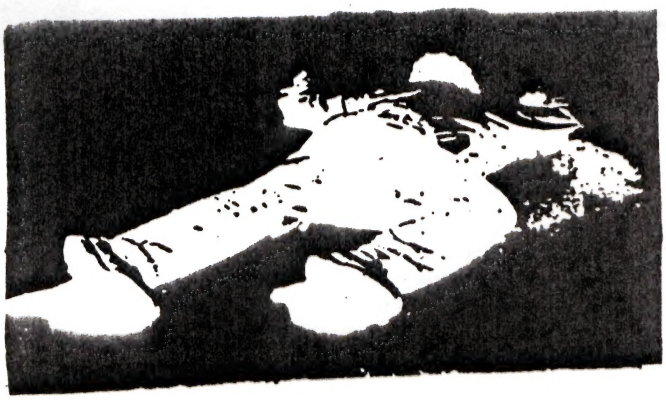
This outraged the local Black community, and resulted in a number of protest demonstrations, with demands for prosecution. Because of the public pressure, Gary Gerbitz, States' chief prosecutor for Hamilton County, then said he was taking the case "under advisement for investigation", but after playing with the case for several weeks, he referred the matter to a special session of the country grand jury. They in turn made a media circus of the case. They only called police witnesses and other adverse parties, they leaked information to the media about the testimoney of police witnesses and psychistrists, and not surprisingly, they found the cops were "only doing their jobs [!]". They literally stated that the victim had caused his own death because he was "...womanizer", "wife beater", "alcoholic", "drug addict", "cop hater" and "bully", among other things. Their conclusion: clearly he should have been killed, for the good of society.

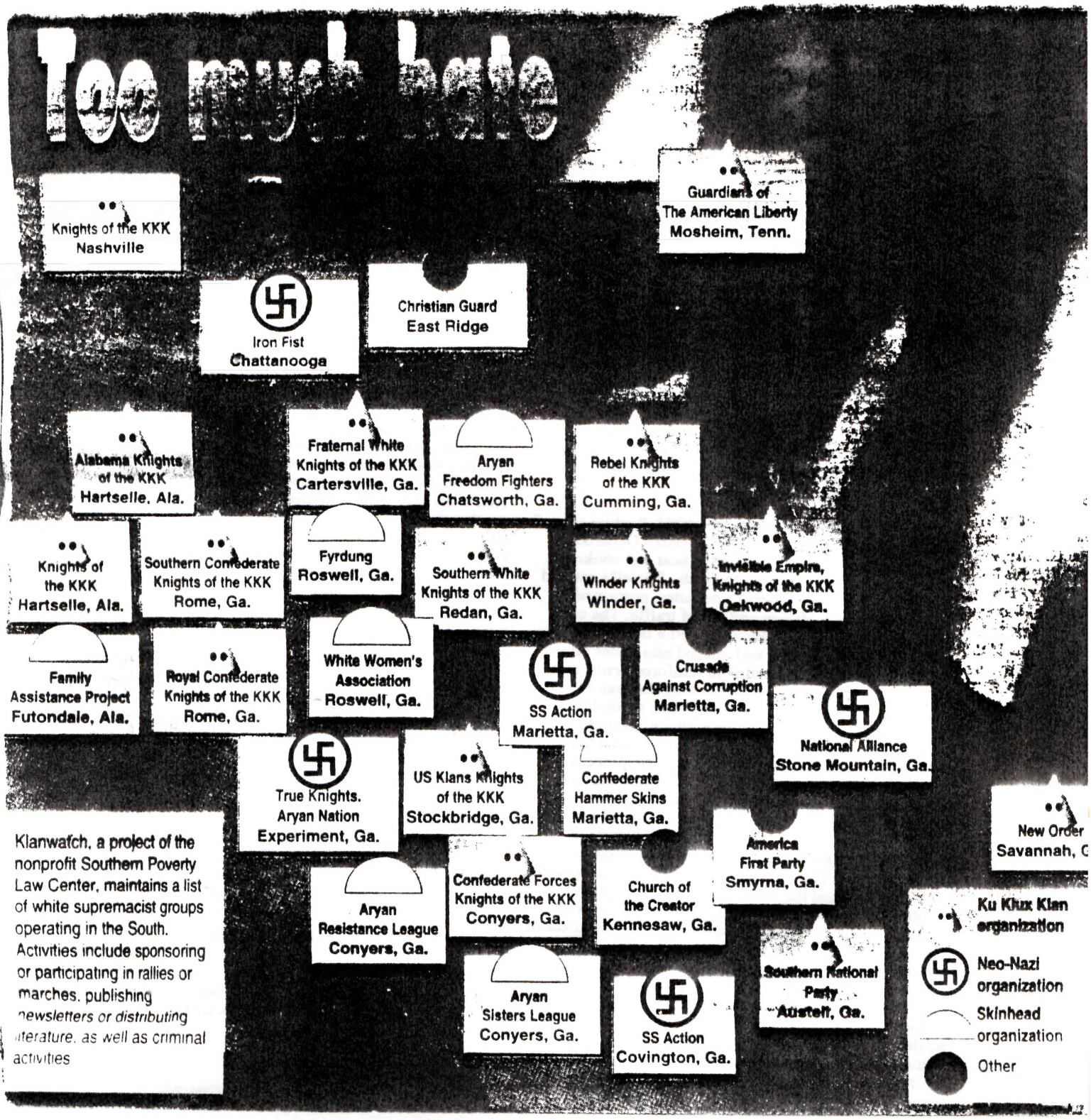
This whitewash of a report was issued on May 11,1993; the next day, the Concerned Citizens for Justice and the Ad Hoc Coalition Against Racism and Police Brutality held a day-long vigil against the grand jury verdict and continued to call for prosecution of the killer cops, and an investigation of the grand jury itself. They publicly stated that they were going to hold hearings for the rest of that week at the county courts building. But the cops, in response to the public embarrassment of the demonstration against police brutality, then hurriedly rushed to hold its own counter-demonstration the next day, called a "memorial to fallen police officers". The very idea of the cops sanctimoniously talking about 25 pigs who have died over the last century, while they have killed that many civilians since 1980, enraged the community even more, and when a group of protesters who were having an impromptu rally against police brutality converged on the so-called "memorial"and chanted "stop killer cops", eight of them were arrested.

They were tried on February 22, 1994 in a criminal show trial, and even with a kangaroo court atmosphere, (e.g. the judge was until two years ago, the assistant DA), six of the protesters were acquitted. However, Lorenzo Komboa Ervin and a Black newspaper editor were convicted and face six months in county prison. This is the same prison where so many other have been murdered, and where the life of one more victim, Roy E. Hill, was taken when guards refused to give him medical attention or take him to a hospital for coronary problems. This is similar to how Rosalind Bradford was allowed to die of a tubular pregnancy at the jail in 1987; how Wadie Suttles was murdered in 1983; how Claiborne Owens was hanged; and so many other killed by local cops in the most grotesque fashion. Yet, although no cop has served a day in jail for the murder of these civilians, these eight Black protesters, who were exercising the "constitutional rights" which the government claims citizens of this country has, were thrown in jail, put on trial, and now two of them face six months in a prison. Six months in a prison in Chattanooga-Hamilton County, Tennessee is very likely a death sentence, especially for a controversial fight like Komboa Ervin!

There has been a gross miscarriage of justice in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Komboa Ervin and Clifford Eberhardt intend to appeal this case to get their unjust convictions overturned, but they need your help. The appeal will cost over $2,000, and will probably only be decided in the State Supreme Court. Will you make whatever donation possible to this case to:

John Johnson, Treasurer
Chattanooga 8 Defense Committee
East Tennessee Anarchist Black Cross
P.O. Box 281
Chattanooga, TN. 37404





Racism and Klan Violence in Chattanooga.

Look at this list of racist groups--all within 25-50 miles of the city of Chattanooga, Tennessee. This list appeared on the front page of the March 4, 1994 edition of the Chattanooga Times newspaper. All these vicious fascist and racist outfits are active in the white community in Chattanooga, Tennessee. We have always believed that there were more in this city than anywhere else in the South, maybe even the whole USA. I'll tell you something else, this ain't even all of them. For instance, the Lookout Mountain Knights of the KKK, White Knights of the KKK, East Ridge NASDAP, and others contain cops, city officials, and others. They came out in 1987, and strode into town to intimidate the Black community, but we set them to flight . The well-funded underground groups are the most dangerous of all.

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